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One Hundred Sixteenth Congress
U. S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs

2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

September 17, 2020

His Excellency Mohammad Ashraf Ghani
President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Presidential Palace
Kabul, Afghanistan

Dr. Abdullah Abdullah
Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation
Presidential Palace
Kabul, Afghanistan

Dear President Ghani and Chairman Abdullah:

As longtime supporters of a peaceful, prosperous, and stable Afghanistan we are hopeful that the negotiations your government has entered into with the Taliban will result in an end to the fighting. The Afghan people have endured pain and hardship in seeking peace and they deserve a future that honors these efforts.

Our countries have worked together to promote and protect rights for women, girls, and minorities in the years following Taliban rule. We are proud of the progress Afghanistan has achieved on these fronts and underscore the importance of preserving these advances. The level of violence against prominent women in Afghan political society and the mothers, daughters, wives, and sisters who live in fear throughout Afghanistan cannot continue. The presence of Afghan women on the government's side of the negotiating table is a positive sign, but the negotiating team must make unequivocally and abundantly clear that women will have a significant role to play in any future Afghanistan.

The 2018 appointment of the first female Afghan Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Roya Rahmani, demonstrates the progress Afghanistan has made regarding women's roles in society and leadership. Ambassador Rahmani has been a fierce champion for the Afghan people, and we in Congress have relished the opportunity to work alongside her. Her

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work for your country should provide a powerful example during the negotiations of the effective role women play today and will continue to play in Afghanistan.

At such a critical moment in Afghanistan's future, we offer our unwavering support and encouragement for the progress that your country has made in the area of women's empowerment and urge you to make this an ongoing priority of your government. A robust commitment to human rights and democratic principles, including equality and respect for all citizens, will be the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman



MICHAEL T. McCAUL
Ranking Member

Cc:

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State